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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Wednesday, November 7, 1934.

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Subject: "Chicken for the Pantry Shelf." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

Along about now many farm folks have the problem of what to do about the hens that aren't laying enough to earn their board and keep -- what to do about entertaining these non-paying guests all during the coming winter.

Many people find that such chickens may as well take up residence on the pantry shelf in cans, the older ones, at least. The young broilers you can use fresh this fall. Serve them to the city relatives when they come to Sunday dinner.

Other people may feel the same way about the rabbits they have kept all summer, may not be able to afford to board them all winter. Well, you know rabbit meat and poultry are much alike and are canned in the same way. So if you send to the Bureau of Home Economics at Washington, D. C., for the mimeographed sheet of meat canning directions, you'll know just how to put the meat in cans properly.

Of course, you can can either young or older chickens and young or older rabbits. But you'll find that the plump, well-fed hens, two years old or so, have a better texture and flavor when they're canned than the six-months old chickens. The same is true of rabbits. Very tender young rabbit needs very little cooking to be at its best in flavor and texture. If you cook it a long time at high heat, naturally it isn't so good. That's often what happens when you can very young tender meat. It's likely to have an overdone taste, and to cook to pieces. You see, no matter what the age of the meat, no matter how young and tender it is, or old and not so tender, it needs the same amount of processing for sterilization.

Well, let's take a few minutes now to run over some of the important points in canning either chicken or rabbit. Important point number one is: Can only under steam pressure. A hot water bath won't do. The hot water can't get hot enough to sterilize the meat, to insure safety from spoilage. So if you haven't a cooker, beg, borrow or buy one.

Important point number two is: Use small containers for canning chicken -- pint glass jars or number 2 or 2 and 1/2 tin cans. This also is a safety measure. Heat can penetrate small containers much more easily than larger ones.

Important point number three. Cut the meat in pieces of a convenient size for serving. Then cut off all surplus fat. Never use flour or meal with the chicken. In fact, don't add anything to that can or jar that will make heat penetration more difficult.

Important point number four. Pre-heat the meat thoroughly before you pack it in the jars, but don't try to cook it thoroughly. It will get plenty of cooking during its stay in the pressure cooker. The idea simply is to heat it just until no red color shows and then to pack it hot into hot jars and process it at once.

Important point number five. Pack the meat loosely in the container. Avoid cramming it down in the jar. Leave plenty of space for the broth to circulate around the meat.

There now. There are five important points about canning chicken or rabbit. The whole idea, you see, is to aid heat penetration in every possible way, yet to keep the best flavor and texture in the canned meat.

Now a point or two about preparing the chicken for canning. You fix it just as you would for cooking -- pick, singe, remove the pin feathers, wash and cut it into the usual pieces for serving. Clean it thoroughly. If you happen to break the gall bladder, don't can that chicken. It will have a disagreeable flavor. And don't try to can the lungs, kidneys, eggs or liver. If you like, you can use the gizzard or the heart. Trim off any large pieces of fat and cut the white meat in large pieces from the breast bone and shoulders. Leave the meat on the bones in the other pieces. When you pack the containers, put at least one piece with bone in each jar. The bony parts like the back, neck and foot, you'll skin and use for making the hot broth to fill up the jars after the meat is packed in.

Some people like to pack all white meat in one jar and all dark meat in another. Some people like to mix them. Take your choice. Of course, if you're canning rabbit, you'll avoid this problem, since rabbit is all white.

Well, here are just a few of the details of canning your surplus chicken or rabbit to aid the family food supply. As I said, if you want information on the complete process from first to last, write your State College or write direct to the Bureau of Home Economics, Washington, D. C. The canning specialists at the Bureau are always glad to help you with any food conservation problem.

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